

Chapter 4

Identification of the South Saami in the Norwegian 1801 Census: Why Is the 1801 Census a Problematic Source?



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Abstract In this chapter, I examine why the Norwegian 1801 census is a problematic source for South Saami history. Both the notion that archival sources necessarily reflect Saami presence and the trust in ethnonyms are refuted. These notions still have repercussions in court decisions and historical narratives. The chapter is based on studies of the Norwegian 1801 census compared with church registers contemporary with the census from areas on both sides of the present Nordland–Trøndelag county borders in Norway. Comparison with the church registers shows that ethnonyms are inconsistent. Often, the census and the church registers did not register the same people as Saami, and there are more people registered as Saami in church registers than in the census. I explain the erratic registration of the Saami by interpreting it as an expression of an identification process, as exclusion and inclusion of the Saami by others as well as a part of colonialism. It exemplifies why non-indigenous sources should be critically interpreted, and how identification of ethnicity constitutes a challenge. I suggest that the 1801 census cannot be treated as a census of the South Saami.

Iktedimmie Tjaalege digkede man åvteste dihte nöörlen almetjeryökneme jaepeste 1801 lea akte muevies gaaltije dan jaarjelsaemien histovrijasse. Dovne dihte vuajnoe mij jeahta väärhkoegaaltije saemien baeliem vuesehte jñ leajhtadimmie etnonymide/åålmegetjiertese Leah heajhtasovveme. Daah diejvesh annje konsekvensh utnieh reakta-aamhtesisnie jñ histovrijes soptsesinie. Tjaalegen väärome lea dihte nöörlen almetjeryökneme jaepeste 1801 viertiestamme gærhkoegærjan daajbaaletje almetjeryökneminie dejstie dajvijste gåabpegen bielestie dehtie daaletje Nordlaanten–Trööndelagen fylhkenraasteste Nöörljesne. Viertiestimmie gærhkoegærjajgumie vuesehte etnihkeles dæhkieh sinsitnien vööste strijrieh. Daamtaj almetjeryökneme jñ gærhkoegærjah eah dehtie seamma almetjidie saemine registreredh, jñ jienebh almetjh Leah registreradamme goh saemieh gærhkoegærjine goh almetjeryöknemisinie. Manne dam joekehts registreradimmiem saemijste tjjelkestem viehkine dam toelhekestidh goh akte identiteeteprosessese, goh ålkoestimie jñ feerhmeme saemijste mubpijste, jñ goh akte bielie kolonialismeste. Daate

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vuesehste man ávteste edtja gaaltijh laejhtehkslaakan toelhkestidh mah eah aalkoeal-metijstie bætieh, jîh guktie identifikasjovne etnisiteeste akte haesteme sjædta. Manne raerestem almetjeryökneme jaepeste 1801 ij mæhtieh átnasovvedh goh akte almetjeryökneme áarjelsaemijste.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is about South Saami history.¹ My first aim with this chapter is to clarify how the Norwegian 1801—census is a problematic source for South Saami history when interpreted from a positivistic or empiricist point of view. This is a criticism of assumptions about both source validity and reliability when using non-Saami sources to research Saami history, especially in relation to the particular historiography of Norwegian and Swedish historical research in the South Saami area. My second aim is to contribute to a better understanding of how non-indigenous sources can be critically interpreted and how identification of ethnicity constitutes a challenge.

4.1.1 Background

In the case of the South Saami, history has been an important political issue. Since the late 1800s, a hypothesis of their late immigration (in the 1600s and 1700s) into large parts of their traditional lands in Sweden and Norway gained foothold among Swedish and Norwegian academics.² This hypothesis was coined during the same period that social Darwinism, colonization, forced assimilation and reindeer grazing laws increasingly undermined Saami society.

Saami researchers and institutions and some Swedish and Norwegian researchers have contested this hypothesis. But over the years, it has been supported by influential Swedish and Norwegian historians and researchers (e.g. Haarstad 1992). Along with a general disinterest in Saami issues, this hypothesis seems to have resulted in the exclusion of Saami topics and questions from historical research and narratives in southern Scandinavia. The hypothesis of immigration excluded the existence of Saami history in large areas. Thus, this hypothesis and the lack of acknowledgement of Saami historical narratives have served as support for colonialism (Falkenberg 1988; Jünge 2005; Kosmo 2013), and thereby court decisions against Saami rights to land, for example, Härjedalsdomen in Sweden (2002) and Trollheimensaken in Norway (1981). Härjedalsdomen and Trollheimensaken were court decisions on Saami land rights where Norwegian and Swedish landowners contested Saami rights to reindeer herding on private land. History played a key part in the court decisions

¹This chapter has been developed and elaborated from previously published material in Norwegian (Hermanstrand 2008, 2014).

²The hypothesis is known in Norwegian as *framrykningsteorien*.

because the question of land rights had to be answered through historical evidence. The above-mentioned hypothesis of late Saami immigration was given value as truth and played an important part in the courts' decisions. The Saami lost in both cases.

In mainstream Norwegian and Swedish research, historians in general have not taken any particular interest in South Saami history, and Saami history has been variably included in historical narratives. Most often the perspective has been non-Saami, and this has been the case even when the intention was otherwise (Sem 2017). Often, the under-representation of Saami history is ascribed to a lack of sources (e.g. Bull and Stugu 2008). My opinion is that several Norwegian historians working with South Saami history, some quite lightly I have to claim, have seen the question of sources as naïvely unproblematic in an empiricist or positivistic way (Haarstad 1992, pp. 9–17). Here, criticism from indigenous theories seems to fit well, part of which points to how traditional positivist approaches to research stem from and serve non-indigenous concerns. Another part of the criticism points to the need to contest notions of objectivity and neutrality (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, p. 2 and 6).

Traditional archival written sources have been seen as trustworthy in the sense that they are believed to reflect Saami presence if the Saami were there. Thus, the lack of any mention of Saami in sources has been interpreted as a lack of Saami presence. This is at the core of the hypothesis of late immigration. For example, the emphasis has been placed on the presence of ethnonyms to identify Saami individuals in such sources as church registers (Haarstad 1992, p. 17 and 83). The trust in the ethnonyms has been infallible. This view has been incorporated in court rulings against Saami rights as seen below in the decision in the Trollheimen case of 1981:

(...) it is ruled out that – even after a considerable research effort – the presence of such a Saami population can be detected in this area. In that case this Saami population must have left traces in other historical sources, now fully available, e.g. in church registers or other public records, official reports, petitions etc., (...). (The Supreme Court of Norway 1981. My translation)

Another argument is simply that there are no or too few sources (Bull 2017). Therefore, it is impossible to write in more detail about South Saami history or refute the hypothesis of late immigration. An approach based on basic knowledge of Saami culture and insights from decolonizing methodology or indigenous theories, for example, does not seem to have been part of the apparatus (e.g. Bull and Stugu 2008). Years of indigenous research have shown that there are other historical sources than the traditional written ones, such as material culture and traditional geographical knowledge (O'Brien 2017, pp. 20–21). In my reading, most of the efforts by Norwegian historians connected to South Saami history fit quite neatly within Jelena Porsanger's description of how the very existence of indigenous people is a research problem (Porsanger 2004, p. 106 with reference to Smith 1999, p. 90).

4.2 The 1801 Census

I have chosen the Norwegian 1801 census as an example. This was the first census in Norway that was supposed to include the entire population, and it is considered rather accurate (The National Archives of Norway, n.d.). There seems to be an assumption that the registration of the South Saami in the census is trustworthy, and it has not been critically examined. Numbers from the census have been used for comparison, even though authors in some cases have noted that especially the reindeer nomads were not always included (Bull 2005, pp. 184–185).

I have studied the registration of the Saami in several parts of the South Saami area. My conclusion is that the 1801 census is highly problematic as a source for South Saami history.

4.2.1 General Remarks

I have studied areas in the northern parts of present-day Trøndelag County and the southern part of present-day Nordland County.

I have chosen the 1801 parishes of Alstahaug, Vefsn and Brønnøy in Nordland County and Overhalla, Nærøy and Snåsa from Trøndelag. I have studied Overhalla, Nærøy and the Bindal part of Brønnøy more closely, and I have systematically compared the census with church registers from the period 1775–1804 (Hermanstrand 2008). For the remaining areas, I have only undertaken limited checks with the church registers for the years 1800–1802 (Hermanstrand 2014).

I initially used the now old digital version of the 1801 census at Digital Archives, where I found people identified as Saami by using the search function. Later I used the newer version as well as the scanned original to check accuracy. The church registers have been read in full for the indicated periods, either on microfilm or on scanned originals at Digital Archives.

4.2.2 The 1801 Census

The 1801 census included the names of every person, such as heads of the household, spouses, children, other family members, servants, lodgers and so on for each household grouped together for each farm, smallhold or house outside towns and cities. There were printed forms and instructions for how to perform the census work (rural and urban areas had different forms). Outside towns and cities, the parish priests were to do the work, often assisted by teachers and church assistants. Even though the aim was to register every individual at his or her location on 1 February 1801, the actual situation was that the priests often interviewed heads of households while attending church (The National Archives of Norway, n.d.).

From the forms and instructions relating to the census, it is quite clear that it was ill-adapted to reflect the variation of contemporary Saami life. The census was made to register a sedentary agricultural or urban population. There were no instructions about how to handle what we today would call race, nationality or ethnicity. Some Saami lived as Norwegians or like Norwegians and with Norwegians. On the other hand, the Saami with a fully nomadic life herding reindeer lived mostly at a distance from Norwegian settlements and were obviously different from Norwegians. Clearly, many Saami led a life that scattered them on a scale between these two examples.

The ethnonym *lap* was used for identification of the Saami in the census. In 1801, the ethnonym *Saami* was not used officially, rather it is an indigenous word that is quite modern in official and Norwegian contexts. The Saami were labelled *fin(d)* or *lap*, with or without various prefixes or in combination, by the authorities and Norwegians. The usage was not formalized and also changed in the period from 1600 to 1800. First, it is quite clear that the terms used for the Saami, *fin(d)* or *lap*, were not completely synonymous, i.e. they referred to different economic and geographical adaptations among the Saami (Hansen 1986, pp. 120–212) (Hammond 1787, p. 447).

Studies of multicultural history have been carried out in the northern part of Nordland County. In these areas, ethnonyms and their reference have been problematized. Evjen and Hansen (2008) state that it is unclear what kind of criteria officials really used in their classifications and identifications of the Saami population (Evjen and Hansen 2008, p. 18). The general picture in the northern part of Nordland County up to 1650 was that the Saami were referred to as finns and lapps. The finns had a more sedentary coastal economy, whereas the lapps were reindeer nomads. Because of their land use, the finns were associated with the Danish–Norwegian realm, whereas the lapps were to a greater extent associated with the Swedish realm. The sources are scarce for the period 1650–1740. Due to the border negotiations between Denmark and Sweden leading up to the finalized border in 1751, a host of sources were produced. In these sources, the Saami were categorized into three groups all belonging to the same people. The overarching term was *lappfinn*, and the three subgroups were *bufinn*, *bygdelapp/bygdefinn* and *lapp*. *Bufinn* were sedentary Saami, *bygdelapp/bygdefinn* referred to Saami who recently had settled inland near the Norwegian settlements and *lapp* referred to the reindeer nomads. This is a very simplified rendering of a more complicated and varied use of terms. The terms were the work of Danish officials, and these officials wanted to indicate to which realm the different groups of Saami belonged. In addition to this come the economic variations and change in the Saami society (Evjen and Hansen 2008, pp. 19–28). In the areas I have studied, the term *lap* is the one used in the 1801 census.

When the border between Sweden and Norway was finalized in 1751, the border treaty had a codicil, the Lappecodicil, about Saami rights to cross the border.³ The ethnonym used in the Lappecodicil was, evidently, *lap*. In the codicil, the question of

³Første Codicill og Tillæg til Grendse-Tractaten imellem Kongerigerne Norge og Sverrig Lapperne betreffende. (Lappekodisillen). Retrieved 27 March, 2018 at <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1751-10-02>.

citizenship was connected to where a Lap had winter land.⁴ If a person did not have a title to winter land, one option was to choose citizenship. The questions of citizenship were settled, for example, in Vefsn in 1761. It is possible that the Lappecodicil could have influenced the way the priests and their assistants looked upon the Saami in relation to the census, but this does not appear to have been a systematic and explicit influence.

It appears that there was no clear strategy or instruction as to how the Saami population was to be identified in the 1801 census, even though the instructions stressed that everybody, no matter profession or status, foreign or citizen, was to be included.⁵ This seems to be a continuation from the first extensive census in Norway in 1769, when ethnicity was not systematically registered. In some areas in 1769, finns and lapps were included in special lists at the end of the census (Evjen and Hansen 2008, p. 24). The first Norwegian census to register ethnicity, i.e. Saami and Kvens,⁶ was in 1845 (Evjen and Hansen 2008, p. 29).

Through studies of examples from the census, it is possible to map how these questions were solved in the areas I have studied. I believe that how the Saami were included in the census may reflect the attitude of the priest and his helpers when it comes to the Saami, since there were no instructions as to how to do conduct the process, nor slots in the forms for the Saami. A description of how this influenced the census and an attempt to understand the background will contribute to a sensible use of the census as a source for South Saami history.

Before considering actual examples, it is also important to envisage the practical questions faced by the priests and their helpers. Their solutions might be purely pragmatic. They had their forms and their instructions as a frame. They also most likely had a perception of the Saami's place in their society. Then came their knowledge about their local society. They had to combine all this when carrying out the practical census work. How could they place nomadic or semi-nomadic Saami within the frame of a 'farm'? They did not fit into this category. What about sedentary Saami smallholders or servants? The term ethnicity was not invented, so how could they be identified? Would they use the terms *lap* or *fin*? Would they consider omitting the Saami altogether? Did they think that ethnonyms were redundant for some Saami?

4.2.3 The Church Registers

The church registers assist the interpretation of the treatment of the Saami population in the 1801 census. Throughout the 1700s, Norwegian priests kept church registers,

⁴The discussion of land rights, or ownership, is left out in this context.

⁵Kongelig reskript ang. en almindelig Folketælling (...) 28 November, 1800. In Fogtman, Laurits (1802): Kongelige Rescripter, Resolutioner og Collegialbreve for Danmark og Norge, København, Gyldendal pp. 804–816. Retrieved 28 November, 2017 at <https://www.nb.no/items/50496d1c53c4755b0287ffd724e56c4f?page=823&searchText=fogtman>.

⁶“Kven” refers to the originally Finnish speaking minority of Northern-Norway.

which was in accordance with government instructions. Even though there was variation between priests and parishes and there were no printed registers, these registers include a host of personal information on baptism, weddings and so on.

The church registers make it possible to study individuals over years and areas. Even though there were no instructions to register the Saami, the priests wrote ethnonyms next to names. However, close study of the registers shows that this was not done in a systematic manner. As opposed to the 1801 census, there was variation in the use of ethnonyms (lap, fin and combinations). Priests did things differently and unsystematically, but were probably influenced by both official and local concepts. The result was that persons could be labelled fin or lap in one place or at one time, and not in another. Sedentary life most often led the priest to omit the ethnonym. In other words, the ethnonyms in the church registers were not only ethnonyms but also markers of economic adaptation (Hermanstrand 2014). This totally undermines the assumption of the Saami always being reflected in sources, for example, by ethnonyms.

As a tool for understanding the census, the church registers allow the researcher to check a variety of factors, such as if the priest knew of a Saami population. Alternatively, were there people in the census, but not in the registers, and vice versa? It is in this fashion that I have used the church registers here when the census lacks or has very few registered Saami.

4.2.4 *Vefsn*

Vefsn was a parish that encompassed the southeastern part of present-day Nordland County. Still today, Vefsn is one of the more central South Saami areas. In the first part of the 1700s, most of it was also a missionary district in the fight against Saami religion. Therefore, it is to be expected that the census included the Saami.

And so it does. The remarkable thing is how it does. The Saami population was placed at the end of the census, literally speaking.⁷ For the Norwegian population, the census follows the order of farm settlements. The Saami are at the end, after the Norwegian farms, under the heading *Hatfieldals og Bøygdens Lapper*. Therefore, it is generally worth paying attention to where the Saami are placed in the census.

Hatfieldal was a part of Vefsn, and judging from the census, the people placed under this heading were probably nomadic reindeer herders, but not only from the area of Hatfieldal. I find it reasonable that they were put under this heading because they were associated with mountains or mountain areas. Apart from that, the lists are similar to the others. However, I find it doubtful that these people were in these areas in February 1801. At that time of the year, reindeer herders would normally have been further east, or west, seeking winter pastures, i.e. they were probably not where the census put them. A thorough examination of this falls outside the scope of

⁷RA (The National Archives), Folketelling 1801 for 1824P Vefsn prestegjeld, 1801, pp. 103b–104a. Retrieved 2 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/ft20090807310297>.

this chapter, but a check with Swedish church registers shows that this is very likely. The nomadic reindeer herders of Vefsn would head eastwards following the Ume River. Thus, they would seek clerical services within Lycksele parish. There is, for example, a list of Norwegian Lapps (*Norriska Lappar*) for the period 1790–1824 in Lycksele parish registers, and several names and families are recognizable from the Norwegian census' headings *Tuftervasfieldet* or *Krutfieldet*. The dates for communion in Lycksele in the 1790s correspond to the time of winter grazing (e.g. March).⁸ Even though the year 1801 is hard to find, the repetitive yearly cycle of the reindeer herders makes it very likely that most of them were not where the Norwegian 1801 census put them.

*Bøygden*s refers to the Saami living sedentarily near or in the Norwegian settlement areas or farms. Following the logic of the order of the census pertaining to Norwegians, they should have been placed in connection to the farm where they geographically belonged. Instead, they were placed in the end, after the nomadic reindeer herders. The sedentary Saami seem to have been deliberately sorted out according to another line of thought than the one used for the Norwegian population. Being placed after the reindeer herders, I believe this strengthens the validity of the assumption that the placement at the end of the census was not the result of a pragmatic approach.

4.2.5 Alstahaug

Alstahaug was a coastal parish to the west of Vefsn. Even though outside the old missionary districts, the area has clearly been within the Saami settlement area from times of old. The Saami are not singled out and put at the end in the 1801 census for Alstahaug, but are found throughout the census in the households or on the farms where they belonged. They are, however, identified by the ethnonym *Lap* after their surname, for example, as is the case for Anders Sjursen and Pernille Hansdatter at the Hestad farm.⁹ Only in a few cases was the ethnonym written in the column for title or profession.

Obviously, the Saami of Alstahaug were included in the census in a different way than that of Vefsn, but there was a need to identify Saami in Alstahaug as well. It is noteworthy that the Alstahaug Saami seem to have been few and sedentary. No nomadic Saami were registered, which is surprising. Alstahaug has well-known reindeer winter pastures, and it would also be expected to find reindeer herders staying within Alstahaug all year round. Therefore, I suspect that a non-sedentary Saami population of Alstadhaug was not included in the census. There are indications

⁸Riksarkivet Sweden, Lycksele kyrkoarkiv, husförhörslängder 1790–1824 (SE/HLA/1010118/A I/5). Retrieved 26 March, 2018 at https://sok.riksarkivet.se/bildvisning/C0034135_00097?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0#?cv=96&z=-450.9444%2C-15.6516%2C4408.8889%2C2511.3031.

⁹RA (The National Archives), Folketelling 1801 for 1820P Alstahaug prestegjeld, 1801, pp. 125b–126a. Retrieved 2 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/ft20090807310318>.

from church registers that there were Saami who were not included in the census, even though they were in the area, for example, the servant Magnild Andersdatter who gave birth to a girl out of wedlock in March 1802. The father was a young boy, and the child must have been conceived in mid-1801. Furthermore, the church register states that this was her second liaison out of wedlock. The first one had been with a man from one of the central farms in the parish. Thus, she most likely was in the parish when the census was made, and she was well known. I cannot find her in the census.¹⁰ Another example is Randi Pedersdatter Sjaaberget. She was buried in July 1801, but I cannot find her in the census either.¹¹

4.2.6 *Brønnøy*

Brønnøy parish is to the west of Vefsn and south of Alstahaug. Traces of old Saami history can be found in the area through toponyms dating back to Medieval times (Bergsland 1994, p. 202), as well as historical sources such as information about the Saami boycott of clerical services in 1734.¹² Therefore, it is remarkable to find that the 1801 census does not include any identifiable Saami.¹³

The church registers can tell a different story. It is evident that the priests knew of a Saami population, sedentary and nomadic, that they just did not include in the census (e.g. Hermanstrand 2008, pp. 82–83). A particularly interesting example is the couple Sari Jørgensen and Malena Pedersdatter. In Easter 1801, they baptized their youngest child, Benedict, in Vassås in Brønnøy. Benedict was written as ‘Lappebarn’ (Lap child), and his mother as ‘Lape quinde’ (Lap woman), so evidently there was no doubt about their ethnicity.¹⁴ This is just a short time after the census, and they had baptized several children in the same church over the years before and used various areas and churches in the parish during their seasonal migrations. They are not included in the census. However, they are mentioned in Overhalla (see below) without children.

¹⁰SAT (Regional State Archives in Trondheim), Ministerialprotokoller, klokkerbøker og fødselsregistre—Nordland, 830/L0444: Ministerialbok nr. 830A08, 1801–1819, p. 4. Retrieved 1 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/kb20050427020249>.

¹¹SAT (Regional State Archives in Trondheim), Ministerialprotokoller, klokkerbøker og fødselsregistre—Nordland, 830/L0444: Ministerialbok nr. 830A08, 1801–1819, p. 2. Retrieved 2 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/kb20050427020247>.

¹²SAT (Regional State Archives in Trondheim), Trondhjems biskops visitatsprotokoll 1732–1770, Visitas i Brønnø 1734.

¹³RA (The National Archives), Folketelling 1801 for 1814P Brønnøy prestegjeld, 1801, pp. 753b–754a. Retrieved 2 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/ft20090807310178>.

¹⁴SAT (Regional State Archives in Trondheim), Ministerialprotokoller, klokkerbøker og fødselsregistre—Nordland, 810/L0137: Ministerialbok nr. 810A01, 1752–1817, p. 143. Retrieved 1 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/kb20071002630236>.

4.2.7 Nærøy

South of Brønnøy and in present-day Trøndelag was the parish of Nærøy. Much of the same is to be said for Nærøy as for Brønnøy when it comes to older Saami history. Additionally, it is important to note that one of the most important sources of old Saami religion, the *Nærøymanuskrift*, was written there in the 1720s. However, there are no identifiable Saami in the 1801 census for Nærøy either.¹⁵

Nærøy is one of the parishes I have studied in greater detail, and through the church registers it is clear that quite a number of Saami families lived in the area but were not included in the census. Moreover, there are some examples of Saami who are included but not identified in the census (Hermanstrand 2008, pp. 79–87, Hermanstrand 2014).

4.2.8 Overhalla

To the east of Nærøy and south of Vefsn was the parish of Overhalla. This was a missionary district from the 1700s just as Vefsn. Covering interior regions of Trøndelag, it is a central Saami area today as well.

The 1801 census for Overhalla resembles that of Vefsn. The Saami are placed at the end. Instead of the name of the community (*bygd*), the expression *Lapperne i Overhalden* (The Lapps of Overhalla) is used.¹⁶ As in Vefsn, the Saami are associated with mountains or mountain areas where they probably did not live at the time of the census. Known migratory patterns for reindeer herders suggest that they were in Sweden or on the Norwegian coast.

Furthermore, there are other factual errors. Some Saami who were included were not in Overhalla but in Brønnøy (Sari Jørgensen and Malena Pedersdatter), where they were not registered at all. However, in a missionary register from 1789, they are registered in the same way as in the lists of the 1801 census.¹⁷ I have a strong suspicion that the 1789 register was used to obtain or check information for the 1801 census. The registration of Sari Jørgensen and Malena Pedersdatter here cannot be well explained unless this is the case. In other words, the census was not always carried out as prescribed.

As with Nærøy, I have studied Overhalla in detail, and it seems that there was a sedentary or semi-sedentary Saami population that was not included. Mission-

¹⁵RA (The National Archives), Folketelling 1801 for 1751P Nærøy prestegjeld, 1801, pp. 679b–680a. Retrieved 2 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/ft20090807310104>.

¹⁶RA (The National Archives), Folketelling 1801 for 1744P Overhalla prestegjeld, 1801, pp. 646b–647a. Retrieved 1 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/ft20090807310070>.

¹⁷SAT (Regional State Archives in Trondheim): *Opteignelse på de finner som sig opholder i Overhaldens Præstegjeld (...) 1789*, Nidaros biskop, pakke nr. 55.

ary registers of 1782¹⁸ and 1789 include several Saami households and individuals labelled *I Bøygden* (or similarly), which translates to *In the community*,¹⁹ i.e. there were Saami who were more or less sedentary. In the 1801 census, no households are labelled like this, even though individuals are. I find it unlikely that these individuals or similar households had disappeared between 1789 and 1801, and I suspect that they were either omitted or included as Norwegians.

4.2.9 *Snåsa*

Southeast of Overhalla was Snåsa parish, again a missionary district from the 1700s. Bearing Vefsn and Overhalla in mind, a reasonable assumption would be to find the Saami at the end of the census for that parish. On the contrary, there are no identifiable Saami at all in the 1801 census for Snåsa.²⁰

Again, judging from knowledge about pastures and the yearly cycles of the reindeer herders, it would be reasonable to assume that the area was used as winter pasture at the time of the census. If the pattern from Vefsn and Overhalla had been followed, several Saami in the eastern parts of Snåsa should have been associated with certain mountain areas, even though they probably were in Sweden for the winter.

A check with the church register for Snåsa confirms that the clergy knew of the Saami, and had, for example, performed three burials in 1800 and 1801. Among them were a 5-year-old child and an 80-year-old woman.²¹ They died in June and May 1801, and therefore should have been in the census, but are not. Moreover, by piecing together family histories as well as information from other sources, it is clear that the Saami were excluded from the census in Snåsa (Hermanstrand and Kosmo 2009, pp. 92–93).

4.2.10 *The 1801 Census Summarized*

My study shows that the 1801 census does not reflect the Saami population of the area. It is clear that even though there are several examples of inclusion of the

¹⁸SAT (Regional State Archives in Trondheim): *Optegnelse på de finner som sig opholder i Overhaldens Præstegjeld (...) 1782*, Nidaros biskop, pakke nr. 55.

¹⁹*Bøygden* (*bygden* in modern writing) is hard to translate into English. It refers to a social and geographical entity of Norwegian rural settlement, but since farms rarely form clusters of settlements, *village* does not reflect the actual situation.

²⁰RA (The National Archives), Folketelling 1801 for 1736P Snåsa prestegjeld, 1801, pp. 548b–549a. Retrieved 1 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/ft20090806360766>.

²¹SAT (Regional State Archives in Trondheim), Ministerialprotokoller, klokkerbøker og fødselsregistre—Nord-Trøndelag, 749/L0468: Ministerialbok nr. 749A02, 1787–1817, pp. 442–443. Retrieved 1 November, 2017 at <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/kb20070928610593>.

Saami population, there are several flaws and challenges connected to the census as a historical source.

The clergy performed the census. They undoubtedly knew of a Saami population in the area of study, even though they probably lacked any intimate knowledge of the people. The census offered no instructions as how to deal with different ethnic groups or nationalities, and the forms were ill-adapted to register the totality of the Saami population. The clergy then chose different strategies as to how to include the Saami.

There are examples of factual errors connected to the Saami population in the census. The nomadic Saami were likely not in the places the census has registered them in. Even in the places where a Saami population was registered, there are omissions. In several parishes, there was quite a large Saami population, but it was not mentioned in the census at all. There are also examples of Saami in the census without any ethnic markers, i.e. they were included as Norwegians.

4.3 Discussion

First, I think my study of the Saami in the 1801 census undermines two of the important foundations of the hypothesis of late Saami immigration into South Saami areas. My study clearly shows the invalidity of the assumption that a lack of sources mentioning the Saami is equivalent to a lack of Saami presence. My study also shows the fallibility of the assumption that Saami were always connected to ethnonyms in written sources. These two assumptions were grounds on which the hypothesis of late Saami immigration into South Saami areas was based.

Furthermore, this also shows that the problem of sources is not only a problem of lack of sources but also a problem of theory and methodology. When sources like a census, or church registers for that matter, do not directly reflect a Saami population, how can that be understood? The census' variable inclusion of the Saami population can be reasonably connected to the lack of clear instructions on how to conduct it. Thus, the census reflects how the clerics performed their task according to their own judgement or attitude.

First, the census, its forms and instructions were not adapted to include a Saami population. The state and its tools reflected the agricultural ethnic Danish and Norwegian way of life as the norm. However, the bureaucracy and the clerics had knowledge about the Saami. This was knowledge that was perhaps limited or erroneous, judging from the errors found in the census, but they were at least aware of this ethnic group. Obviously, the clerics had to actively find ways to process their presence in connection with the census. I think it is a valid assumption that the variety of ways the Saami are registered and identified reflects the attitudes of the priests and their assistants when it comes to the Saami group. This in turn reflects the attitudes on the local and national levels, and it could be argued, also the contemporary international attitudes about 'the Other'. However, and perhaps surprisingly, the census thus reflects the

fact that the Saami were an ethnic group and a people even though the officials could not quite label them.

The most radical way of dealing with the Saami population was to exclude it altogether. I interpret this as an expression of an attitude that did not see the Saami as belonging to the population of the kingdom. Therefore, it was a natural conclusion to leave them out of the census. The otherness was complete. It is almost impossible, though, to be sure that all Saami were excluded, for example, in Snåsa, because another possibility was to include those Saami with quite a Norwegian-like lifestyle in the census like everyone else in the kingdom's population. The individuals were included with no ethnonyms at all, i.e. they can only be identified in the census through comparison with other sources on an individual level. However, this tells us about a major ethnic marker. If your livelihood and lifestyle did not differ or stand out, you belonged.

A less inclusive way of covering the Saami was to include Saami with a Norwegian-like lifestyle in the census alongside everyone else within the frames of the census, but with the ethnic marker *lap* connected to the person in question. This again does not exclude that others were excluded or included without ethnonyms. I interpret this to mean that even though your livelihood or lifestyle did not stand out that much and you belonged in a wider society, other factors confirmed the individuals as different, for example, ancestry or language. In other words, ethnicity played a role.

Then comes the solution from Overhalla and Vefsn. The Lapps were put at the end. This could of course be a pragmatic solution, but if so, why were they not placed in the beginning? Most probably, these Saami were reindeer herders or closely connected to the reindeer economy. The geographical areas they were ascribed to were mountains rather than farms but did not reflect the total area they would have used for seasonal herding, for example, closer to the Norwegian farms or in Sweden. The herders were probably not in those areas at the time of the census, and there were errors in the registration. Thus, this group of Saami was placed well outside the communities of the Norwegian settlements. They were placed in the 'wilderness', and associated with the missionary efforts of the 1700s, as illustrated by the fact that the missionary registers were probably used to complete the census of Overhalla. At the end of the end, so to speak, came other Saami considered 'Lapp-ish'. In Overhalla, this meant a number of unmarried individuals and widows who worked on Norwegian farms and in communities. They could have been placed in the ordinary census lists for the farm they worked on but were placed at the end of the census' list of Lapps. In Vefsn, this meant a list of crofters and servants who lived more like Norwegians and who could have been in the ordinary census lists for the farm where they belonged. I interpret the lists from Overhalla and Vefsn as an expression of a clear dichotomy the clerics perceived between the Saami and the rest of the population, and an expression of the dichotomy they perceived between the non-reindeer herders and the reindeer herders, as well as the Norwegians. To place more or less sedentary Saami after the reindeer herders could be understood as an expression of a judgement about some Saami being more Saami than others, or rather more *lap* than others, to use the contemporary term.

I believe that this identification of the Saami provides the opportunity to study a step in the process of how this identification developed. The contemporary concepts were *fin(d)* and lapp. It is also clear that missionaries and officials tended to differentiate between *fin(d)s* and lapps, and they had more interest vested in the religious life of and sovereignty over the lapps. That term became more and more connected to reindeer herders. In some sources, the distinction between the reindeer herders and the others is made quite explicitly. The Lappecodicill of 1751 also vested certain rights with lapps, not *fin(d)s*. The word *fin(d)* is not used in the Lappecodicill. I suggest that the census itself played an important part in defining ethnicity and must be interpreted accordingly. A census can be connected to the development and the conceptualization of the national state (Soltvedt 2004a, pp. 11–12). I understand the 1801 census as a source that in its making was part of a process of ethnic identification and part of a colonial process, where it is an expression of the process of identification, exclusion and inclusion of the Saami by others.

According to modern standards, there are certain criteria for censuses. If these are not met, there is an agreement that a certain statistical material does not meet the standards of a census. For example, a census should be complete, encompass a defined area and be carried out by an efficient apparatus with support in laws and government (Soltvedt 2004a, p. 6). I doubt that the Norwegian 1801 census meets the modern standards of a census for the Saami population. I find it hard to say it is complete in the sense that we can be sure that every Saami individual has been included. It encompasses a defined area, but not a defined area from a Saami point of view. The apparatus that conducted it had its support in government, but was it efficient when it came to the Saami population? Perhaps, the census has to be treated in another way as a historical source for Saami history, i.e. not as a census? This points to the need for a much more complex methodology when non-Saami sources are to be used for (South-)Saami history.

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